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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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## OUTLOOK NOTES

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THAT there is a science of education, either *in esse* or *in posse*, is now a part of the creed of most people. Some still do not believe that there is such a thing. In one distinct mark of a science it must be granted that education is still far from the dream of perfection, namely, in its technical nomenclature. The word "education" itself is used with several distinct meanings, which are by no means sharply delimited, and often lead to confusion. Three terms of common use are made to denote interchangeably each of three very different things, each of which really needs one good name that shall be peculiarly its own. These terms are "program," "curriculum," and "course of study." The hardest worked of the trio is "curriculum," which is made to do service in all three capacities. The need for the other expressions, "program," and "course of study," grows out of modern conditions. "Curriculum" is old and time honored. So long as all students studied the same thing this word sufficed for all uses, but with the increase in range of studies offered in schools and colleges it became necessary to express a new idea for which the old word was generally, but not accurately, used. With the large range of studies—far more than any one student can pursue—that is now offered in our secondary schools,

three distinct features need to be specifically named and accurately differentiated to denote (1) the whole range of studies offered by a particular school—the intellectual menu that it provides ; (2) the particular meal selected for any student or class of students from this menu ; (3) to specify the separate dishes which make up the menu and the meal.

The Committee on College Entrance Requirements very sensibly recommends that for the first we shall agree to use “program ;” for the second the word “curriculum,” and for the third the word “course.” Which shall denote which is more a matter of agreement than of natural law. But agreement is certainly highly to be desired in order to put bounds to the confusion now prevailing in educational discussions through the careless and inaccurate use of these terms. In a small school the program and the curriculum might possibly correspond, though in very few schools is this at present actually the case. Rare is the secondary school that does not offer more studies than any one pupil can take in the prescribed length of time. The several courses of study furnish the units which make up both curriculum and program. At present the curriculum is a group of courses selected from the program and recommended to students having certain specific objects in view, generally preparation for some particular course in college or technical school. Indications are not lacking that the curriculum will become more and more an individual matter, selected and arranged according to the capacities and aims of the individual student. Just at present attention is directed and doubtless needs to be directed more to the “course” of study in the sense specified above than to the other two elements mentioned. Programs and curriculums have had their day, not that their day is past, but their relative importance is diminished. Emphasis is to be laid in the future upon the units. The virtue of a state rests upon the virtue of the individual citizens ; so will the value of all curriculums and programs be determined by the thoroughness and appropriateness of the courses of study out of which they are built.

WHILE dried apples, dried corn, dried beef, and other dried things are still on the markets of the world, they by no means retain their former eminence as popular staples of diet.

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DESICCATING  
PROCESS**

Even canned products, which aim to retain some of nature's juice and succulency, have been disagreeably affected in general esteem by modern history.

The original article itself, fresh from nature, now holds first place in dietary councils. Here is a suggestion for those who undertake to furnish a diet for the mind. There must have been a widespread notion that what was intellectually interesting was in some way immoral, for text-books and outlines of courses of study have been to a large extent built upon the plan of making them as little attractive as possible. Difficulties to be overcome, attention to be subjected to the stern dominion of the will, have been factors too mighty in the dogma of formal discipline for any great sins against them to be tolerated. The dry-fact-bacillus has ravaged far and wide. Even books about education have not been able through their inherent interest to attract those who ought to read them in opposition to the deluding charms of poetry, history, and fiction. To introduce something of humane interest into text-books or outlines of courses, has been regarded as showing weakness, if not weak-mindedness. Few things can be conceived of more dry and forbidding than the average outline of a course of study in a secondary school. It is as formal and as schematic as possible. Only the barest enumeration of facts can generally be found there. This, of course, saves room, but it frightens readers. What is given is so little as to be unintelligible to all except the writers. Parents and children who have to use it find it about as helpful as so many pages of Babylonian hieroglyphics. The cost of printing some few pages is saved, but the end for which the course is published is missed altogether. Why should there not be an outline of courses given which should contain something of the scope, of the courses, the method of teaching, the material used, and, particularly, of the reasons for studying that particular subject, the educational aim to which it contributes? Why should such an outline not show in cases of history, literature, science, and the

languages something of the charm and fascination which those subjects possess? Why picture the course of study as a dreary desert which one must pass to reach a desirable resting place upon the farther side? Why not at least show that in this desert there are oases with cool springs and springing flowers? Why not take twenty pages, if needed, to interest, and attract, and instruct, rather than five pages to puzzle, and dissuade, and disenchant? Why exclude the elements of humanity and literature altogether from the official descriptions of institutions maintained by the people for humanistic and literary culture?

C. H. THURBER